



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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R.I. Department of Education recognizes Broadband Rhode Island Digital Literacy Training Curriculum for adult education programming

Partnership will enhance effort to close digital-skills gap for adult learners

March 4, 2014 (Providence, R.I.) — The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), in partnership with the Rhode Island Office of Digital Excellence, today announced that the Broadband Rhode Island (BBRI) digital literacy training curriculum will be implemented statewide in adult education programs.

For many adult learners in Rhode Island, unfamiliarity with computer and Internet technology poses an obstacle to reaching their full potential in today's workforce. This initiative, which aligns with the RIDE statewide technology standards for adult learners, will improve adult education and workforce training. The goal of this initiative is to better prepare Rhode Island learners to obtain the technical skills they will need to compete in a global digital economy and to improve their lives.

"One of the goals of our strategic plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*, is to provide more high-quality educational opportunities for adult learners," said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. "Just as we are expanding the use of digital literacy in our elementary and secondary schools, it is important to bring digital literacy into our programs for adult learners as well. Adult learners need computer and digital-literacy skills to further their education and to succeed in the workforce, and this initiative will help prepare our adult learners for success in their chosen careers."

"We're honored and excited to continue our work with the adult education community. This new partnership with RIDE will help to scale our digital inclusion efforts throughout the state," said Stuart Freiman, Broadband Program Director, Office of Digital Excellence. "The results of this challenge could greatly enhance the current solutions to this pressing 21st-century social issue."

Under this new initiative, educators working in adult-education programs will receive training in how to teach the BBRI Internet Basics Curriculum. This training will help educators further develop their skills in using and teaching technology. As part of this initiative, adult-education programs in Rhode Island will have Technology Point Persons, who will help coordinate the training, materials, and resources that the programs will use to advance students toward their goals.

Within all of the state government agencies that include client education or workforce training as part of their mission, "The hope is that they will now include the expectation of digital literacy training as well," said Jill Holloway, director of the Rhode Island Adult

Education Professional Development Center, which offers training workshops and other assistance to the educators who work with the state's adult population.

Broadband Rhode Island Internet Use Fast Facts:

- Approximately 30 percent of Rhode Island adults do not use the Internet today.
- Broadband coverage and adoption data is now available on ProvPlan's Community Profiles.
- Key barriers to non-adoption are: affordability, relevance, and lack of training.
- 15 percent of Rhode Island adults currently do not have a high-school diploma or GED and will need to take the computer-based version of the GED to achieve the credential.
- Nearly 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies post job openings exclusively online.
- The high rate of existing broadband coverage in Rhode Island should enable the acceleration of adoption usage, connectivity, and digital literacy efforts across the state.
- The 50 public libraries throughout Rhode Island help bridge the digital divide by offering some type of digital literacy support.
- BBRI has identified more than 200 public computing sites, has presented 18 digital literacy training workshops or forums, and has trained nearly 150 volunteer digital literacy trainers.

About Broadband Rhode Island

Broadband Rhode Island, an initiative of the Office of Digital Excellence, R.I. Department of Administration, is funded through December 2014 by the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program (SBDD) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The initiative focuses on broadband infrastructure mapping and broadband planning in the State of Rhode Island. Programs address public awareness and education about broadband and study and develop plans to increase adoption rate and broadband usage across all aspects of our lives including in our homes, schools, businesses, libraries, healthcare facilities, public safety and government. To learn more about Broadband Rhode Island please visit: <http://broadband.ri.gov>

About the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)

In partnership with other state agencies and organizations, RIDE is developing a comprehensive system of pathways and other learning opportunities that are designed to prepare all learners, including adults learners, to be college and career ready. To learn more about adult education programs in Rhode Island, please visit:

<http://ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/EducationPrograms/AdultEducationGED>

To learn more about the BBRI digital literacy training initiative, visit <http://literacy.broadband.ri.gov>.